THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The original estimated cost of Golden Quadrilateral Project at 1999 price was Rs.25,055 crore (excluding interest during construction (IDC) and escalation). The expenditure as on 30.11.2005 on the project is Rs. 23559.21 crore. The final cost indication would be known after completion of all projects. However, the actual expenditure on the project is not likely to differ much from the estimated cost, allowing for normal inflation.

Safety on the National Highways

3316. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to setting up of a regulatory body to oversee the safety on the National Highways;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Committee on infrastructure has been recommended for setting up of such a body;

(c) if so, by when such a recommendation be made by the above committee; and

(d) what are the reasons for delay in setting up such a regulatory authority?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) A Committee has been appointed to deliberate and recommend on creation of a dedicated body on Road Safety and Traffic Regulations under the Chairmanship of Shri S. Sundar, Sr. Fellow, The Energy Research Institute. The Committee has been remitted to submit its recommendations by 31st January, 2006 to enable a final decision by Committee On Infrastructure chaired by the Prime Minister.

Shipping companies neglecting sea farers

3317. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the sea farers are easily abandoned and neglected by the shipping companies and ship owners despite the fact that they are the backbone of maritime economy which in turn drives the world economy;